



**Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**

Room 3416 Federal Building  
700 West Capitol Ave.  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Web: <http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov>

# News Release

Release No.:100118-01

**Contact:** Reginald Jackson, State Public Affairs Specialist  
(501) 301-3133(w) 501-352-7761(c)  
[reginald.jackson@ar.usda.gov](mailto:reginald.jackson@ar.usda.gov)

## **USDA Announces New Projects to Improve Mississippi River Basin Water Quality**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Oct. 1, 2018** – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has selected five new projects in Arkansas for its 13-state Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI). In addition, the initiative has been extended in five previously selected Arkansas watersheds.

Through MRBI, NRCS works with producers in targeted watersheds to voluntarily implement conservation practices that prevent runoff of sediment and nutrients, which can degrade water quality.

“NRCS targeted water quality efforts have steadily demonstrated tremendous benefits in Arkansas and across America’s landscape and water bodies,” said Mike Sullivan, state conservationist for USDA’s [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS). “By focusing resources where we can have the best impacts, we’re improving the quality of rivers and streams across the country while also giving producers the tools they need to make good investments on their working lands.”

### ***New Priority Areas***

NRCS will work with partners through a readiness phase to develop watershed plans in the following new project areas:

- Upper Lower St. Francis (portion of Clay County);
- Middle Cache (portion of Jackson County);
- Lower St. Francis (portion of Crittenden County);
- Cadron Creek-Brewer Lake Watershed (portions of Faulkner and Conway counties); and
- Cache River (portion of Woodruff county) watersheds.

The readiness phase allows for a year of planning and watershed assessment in the five watersheds by providing greater technical assistance to help ensure critical source areas are identified. Following the readiness phase, selected watersheds will receive financial assistance to implement MRBI with an approved project proposal.

-more-

Helping People Help the Land

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Basic elements of the watershed assessment may include watershed, hydrologic and water quality characterization, resource analysis and source assessment, analysis of treatment and opportunities, establishment of interim metrics, description of planned alternatives and costs and an outreach plan that will outline strategies to engage producers and identify landowners within critical areas.

### ***Existing Priority Areas***

The following existing priority areas in Arkansas were extended and will offer financial assistance through FY19:

- Caney Creek (portion of Cross County);
- Middle Strawberry (portion of Sharp County);
- Upper Bayou/Macon (portions of Desha and Lincoln counties);
- Cache Willow/Podo (portions of Jackson, Lawrence and Craighead counties); and
- Tupelo Bayou/Beaverdam Creek (portion of Faulkner County) watersheds.

Arkansas NRCS recently announced a Nov. 2, 2018, application deadline for farmers and landowners in these five priority areas to submit applications to receive financial assistance to implement conservation activities through EQIP for the 2019 program year. Applicants can sign up at their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service field service center.

Agricultural producers interested in learning more are encouraged to contact their [local USDA service center](#) or visit the NRCS national website at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

###